1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

tity to supply the local markets, rice can never be an export crop for the Min Chia farmer. A quantity is sent up to Li Chiang and Chien Ch'uan, which having a colder climate, are less productive; but the cost of transporting rice on mule back, the only means of transport, is so high that this trade can never develop on a large scale. Therefore, in a good year the price of rice at Ta Li falls very low and the farmer's purchasing power declines proportionately ; in a bad year the quantity of rice harvested is not sufficient to provide an export surplus, and the poorer farmers, after paying their rice rents, have difficulty in living off the remainder of the crop, and cannot afford to make other purchases. The rice standard is therefore a check on trade and a factor causing the standard of living to remain low.

The Min Chia, who are in most respects a practical and hard headed people, were not unaware of these disadvantages, and sought to escape from them by producing an export crop which would not interfere with the cultivation of rice, and would yet command a good price in distant markets. Such a crop must have a high value for small bulk, for as it must be transported for at least two weeks on mule back to reach any market of importance (either Yunnanfu or Burma) no bulky inexpensive commodity would show a profit after the costs of transport were deducted. Such a crop they found in opium, which was introduced into Yunnan in the first half of the nineteenth century. Opium admirably fulfilled the conditions outlined above. It was planted on the rice lands as a winter crop, harvested in May before the rice seedlings are transplanted. Therefore it did not interfere with rice cultivation. It was light and fetched a very high price in the markets of Yunnanfu whence it was transported to other parts of China. It thus provided the Min Chia with, from their point of view, the perfect export crop, which brought outside money into the closed economy of Ta Li and

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

enabled the farmer to buy the products of other regions for cash.

It is an ironical fact that the efforts of the Central Government of China, urged on by the moral pressure of the rest of the world, to do good, should have resulted in the infliction of great economic damage and hardship, at least temporarily. In 1935 the Central Government, inspired by the reforming ardour of General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, introduced its plan for the gradual suppression of opium cultivation throughout the Chinese Republic. The Provincial Government of Yunnan, in spite of the prospect of severe loss of revenue, was induced to co-operate, and the suppression plan was applied. Learning from the disastrous consequences of the earlier attempt at opium suppression undertaken by the Manchu Dynasty in 1910, the authorities made no attempt to prohibit cultivation at once and everywhere. The plan provided for the suppression by *hsien* or administrative districts, and was applied in two stages. In the first year warning was published that suppression was to come into force. No fresh planting was to be permitted, but if opium crops were raised from old plants, no action was taken. In the spring of the second year public proclamations announced the application of the second stage of rigorous suppression. Farmers were warned to weed their fields, for if so much as one poppy were found growing in a field, the field was to be confiscated to the public lands.

This plan was applied to Ta Li and the other Min Chia areas in 1936 (first stage) and in 1937 the second rigorous stage of suppression was carried out. From the summer of 1937 there has been no opium poppy grown in the Min Chia region, nor in the other *hsien* of western Yunnan as far north as Wei Hsi and from Yunnanfu westwards to Teng Yueh.[1]

[1] Personal observation. The *hsien* of Wei Hsi and Chu Tien in the valley of the High Yang Tze came within the scope of the scheme one year later than Ta Li and Chien Ch'uan.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

249 185 276 It speaks well for the influence of the Central Government in a remote area, and for the authority of the Provincial Government of Yunnan and its officers, that this campaign of opium suppression has been carried out with perfect success and without occasioning revolts, lawlessness or open resistance, although it has vitally affected the entire population of Yunnan, very much to their immediate detriment.

249 185 276 458 No one will seriously question the right and duty of the government to suppress the cultivation of opium as the only sure way of eventually suppressing the consumption of the drug and freeing the Chinese people from an undoubted evil. No one, either, who has lived in western China will doubt their courage in undertaking a task both difficult and highly unpopular. That the nation will ultimately derive great benefit from the ending of the opium habit is incontestable; but that the immediate effects in western Yunnan have been most serious is also unquestionable. In the absence of any alternative export crop to replace opium, and the absence of communications making any more bulky export commercially profitable, the result of suppression has been a profound economic depression in the areas affected. Land values fell by one third in 1936, and in that and subsequent years business at the great fairs in and near Ta Li, when the Min Chia make their annual purchases of goods produced abroad or on the coast, fell to a fraction of that done in former years.

248 185 Against this must be set the efforts of the government to provide a new export crop and develop communications. It is probable that had not the war with Japan absorbed the energies and the money of the government in the national struggle these efforts would have been more effective than they have been. An attempt has been made to introduce the cultivation of cotton. This has made some small progress in other districts, but the climate and soil of Ta Li are not suitable, and cotton growing could not be attempted there.

4: Liu K-4 (no date) 1944 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

one sheep is sacrificed for prayer to avoid insect pests and for thanksgiving for their coming crops. The third occasion is called the "West Wind" ceremony. It is held around October, and one sheep is sacrificed for the purpose of praying that no west wind may destroy their crops, or a thanksgiving that no west wind has destroyed their crops. The fourth ceremony is called "Closing Mountain" Ceremony. It is held sometime in November, in which in some localities six sheep or one cow is sacrificed as a final thanksgiving to the gods for their harvest, and from that time on the mountains are closed by snow, and no one can go in until after the "Opening Mountain" ceremony the next spring.

These are only a few examples to illustrate how climatic and geographic factors are limiting the economic resources, the characteristics, the mode of living, and the mode of thinking of the people.

I wish to mention how the tribes people, as affected by their climatic and geographical environments, have created two great problems for the government of Li-fan County:

I. The hugeness of the area, the difficulties in transportation, and the variations in topography and in climate have divided the county into a number of isolated islands of communities who have independently been moulded by their individual environments into different social groups, and the county government is not able to get its influence to radiate far into the inaccessible places. Thus, even today, the part of the county that is under the direct control of the county government is really the region between Wei-chow and the Hung-chiao Mountain. The rest of the area is still under the rule of T'u-ssus. There are four T'u-ssus in Li-fan, governing nearly two thirds of the area of Li-fan. The tribes people under the rule of a T'u-ssu do not pay taxes to the government, and they do not obey the laws of the government. Therefore they are a constant source of trouble.

Owing to the high death rate and the decrease of population in the area, two of the T'u-ssus have died without heirs, not even a daughter to get a husband to take care of affairs. Another T'u-ssu has died but has a daughter, so the brother of the Wa-ssu T'u-ssu 瓦寺土司 of Wen-chwan is married in to be the T'u-ssu. There is really no one strong enough to head things up and affairs are in a rather chaotic situation. One local leader, Su 蘇, is trying to be the T'u-ssu of all. He has married two woman rulers, and is trying to get into power by marriage. That is a serious issue which the Li-fan government is facing because it is closely connected with the poppy cultivation problem.

II. The second problem is that of poppy cultivation. Perhaps most of you have heard of the armed conflict around Mao Hsien 茂縣 and Mao Kung 懋功 last summer. It is a question that cannot be settled by military force. Opium is the one thing that brings cash to the mountain people because the crops are not subject to destruction by bears and wild pigs. It is not bulky, and is therefore easy to carry through the dangerous mountain paths. What the people put in is relatively small, but what they gain is tremendous. In the valleys

4: Liu K-4 (no date) 1944 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

249

now under the direct control of the county government, one can see huge stretches of once cultivated slopes that are now lying waste. "Because," the farmers say, "from the day poppy cultivation was forbidden we could not afford to cultivate all these lands, because there are too many wild animals coming out from the mountains to destroy the crops. We can cultivate only as much as we can protect."

As a result of this the people are terribly poor, due to the lack of salable crops. The digging of medicinal herbs is also on the decline in recent years. In the interior of the mountains the situation is still worse. People cannot talk about law and order, loyalty, and faithfulness on empty stomachs. Military force cannot conquer the hearts. A new way must be discovered to help the mountain peoples to produce something that is easy to carry, yet can bring in a financial income that will enable them to buy their daily necessities. When the mountain peoples discover that something is more profitable than opium, they will stop cultivating the poppy of their own accord. Therefore, the best way to help these tribes people in the mountains is to help them to help themselves, by helping them to better adjust themselves to their particular environments.